

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 /081 W

----- 084223

R 311850Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4769

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PLAB, FR

SUBJECT: CFDT-CGT RELATIONS

1. SUMMARY: FOR FIRST TIME CFDT, A COMPONENT OF THE LEFT, STATES PUBLICLY THAT THE LEFT IS NO LONGER CREDIBLE. AN OPEN DEBATE IS DEVELOPING BETWEEN CGT-CFDT WHICH SEEMS TO REFLECT THE PC-PS SQUABBLING. UNITY OF ACTION PACT BETWEEN CGT AND CFDT, WHICH SERVES INTERESTS OF BOTH ORGANIZATIONS, IS LIKELY TO SURVIVE AND RESIST PC-PS TENSION. END SUMMARY.

1. "THE LEFT IS NO LONGER CREDIBLE." THESE WORDS, WHICH APPEARED IN THE PRESS ON 25 OCTOBER, WERE LEAKED OUT BY NO OTHER THAN THE CFDT AND ARE PART OF A REPORT ON "THE CRISIS OF THE LEFT" PRESENTED TO THE CFDT NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING 22-25 OCTOBER.

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2. THE REPORT WHICH WAS PREPARED BY LESILLE-OGREL,

CFDT SECRETARY IN CHARGE OF EDUCATION, SAID THAT THE "UNITY OF THE LEFT" AND THE COMMON PROGRAM WHICH CEMENTS THIS RELATIONSHIP EXIST ONLY FORMALLY. THE PARTIES OF THE LEFT ARE RAISING QUESTIONS NOT TO BE DEBATED BUT FOR INTERNAL POLITICAL PURPOSES AND AS A MEANS TO UNDERMINE THE PARTNER AND THUS IMPROVE THEIR RELATIVE POSITION IN THE EYES OF THE PUBLIC. "THE POLITICAL CIRCLES," SAYS OGREL, "ENJOY THIS GAME BUT THE WORKERS ARE GETTING CONFUSED."

3. THE FOREGOING ILLUSTRATES CFDT'S CAPACITY FOR A LUCID ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE PARTIES OF THE LEFT, EVEN AT TIMES WHEN THE IDEOLOGUES SEEM TO BE PUSHING THE CFDT INTO THE BLUE YONDER OF UTOPIA AND ILLUSION. THIS IS ALSO THE FIRST TIME THAT AN ORGANIZATION OF THE LEFT HAS GONE SO FAR AS TO STATE EXPLICITLY WHAT HAS BY NOW BECOME COMMON KNOWLEDGE TO ALL OBSERVERS, NAMELY THAT THE PC-PS QUARREL HAS UNDERMINED THE CREDIBILITY OF THE LEFT AS A VALID ALTERNATIVE TO THE PRESENT MAJORITY.

4. CFDT'S SYMPATHIES WITH THE SOCIALIST PARTY HAVE BEEN WELL KNOWN EVEN IF THESE HAVE BEEN THE CAUSE OF CONSIDERABLE INTERNAL DEBATE WITHIN CFDT. CRITICS ARGUE THAT THE CFDT'S SUPPORT AND ASSOCIATION WITH THE PS WAS IN CONTRADICTION WITH THE CFDT'S PLEDGE TO INDEPENDENCE AND AUTONOMY OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT. SOME OBSERVERS HAVE ENTERTAINED THE THOUGHT THAT CFDT WAS SEEKING A PRIVILEGED RELATION WITH THE PS OF THE TYPE FORCE OUVRIERE ENJOYED IN ITS RELATION WITH THE SFIO IN THE 40S AND 50S.

5. IN VIEW OF CGT'S WELL-KNOWN ATTACHMENT TO THE PCF, WHAT HAD INTERESTED OBSERVERS IN THE LAST YEAR OR SO WAS THE FACT THAT THE PS-PC QUARREL HAD NOT BEEN EXTENDED TO THE CGT-CFDT RELATIONSHIP. UP UNTIL RECENTLY BOTH LABOR ORGANIZATIONS SEEMED TO BE MAKING SUSTAINED EFFORT TO LIVE UP TO THEIR "UNITY OF ACTION" PACT WHICH WAS FIRST CONCLUDED IN 1970 AND REAFFIRMED IN JUNE 1974, AND TO BE EQUALLY AWARE OF THE NEED TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PRESERVE SUCH UNITY. FOR THE CGT IT MEANT RESPECTABILITY AND PROTECTION AGAINST THE GHETTO DAYS OF THE PERIOD BEFORE 1968. FOR THE CFDT IT MEANT CREDENTIALS OF A SOCIALIST ORIENTATION, CREDIBILITY AS A COMPONENT OF THE BROAD ALLIANCE OF THE LEFT IN FRENCH POLITICS, EFFECTIVENESS IN TRADE UNION AGITATION THROUGH RELIANCE ON CGT MUSCLE, AND ABOVE ALL AS A WAY FOR THE CFDT TO INFLUENCE CGT TO LOOSEN ITS TIES WITH THE

PCF. THIS LAST POINT MAY SEEM AN INCREDIBLE ILLUSION
BUT CFDT LEADERS HAVE BEEN NURSING IT ALL ALONG IN
EARNEST.

6. IN THE LAST FEW WEEKS, HOWEVER, THE CGT HAS GIVEN
UNMISTAKABLE SIGNS OF WANTING TO TAKE ITS DISTANCE
FROM THE CFDT BY ACTING INDEPENDENTLY EVEN UNDER

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CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH NORMALLY WOULD HAVE REQUIRED
PRIOR COORDINATION WITH THE CFDT.

7. ALL IN ALL CGT'S ATTITUDE PARALLELS THAT OF THE
PCF IN ITS OWN RELATIONS WITH PS. BOTH CGT AND PCF
IN THEIR RESPECTIVE DOMAINS ARE MAKING A DETERMINED
EFFORT TO ASSERT THEIR IDEOLOGICAL IDENTITIES AND

CLAIMS OF EXCLUSIVE REPRESENTATION OF THE WORKING CLASS. IN FACT THIS CONVERGENCE OF PCF-CGT PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOR TOWARDS THEIR RESPECTIVE PARTNERS HAS SO IMPRESSED THE CFDT LEADERS AS TO BRING HOME THE EXTENT TO WHICH CGT IS RESPONSIVE TO PCF DIRECTION. AS ONE CFDT LEADER PUT IT TO LABATT FOR THE FIRST TIME, "SEGUY (CGT SECGEN) HAS BEEN REVEALED TO BE MERELY A CGT SPOKESMAN FOR THE PCF AND NOT A CGT POLICY MAKER."

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8. IN A SPEECH ON 28 OCTOBER SEGUY ARGUED THAT THE CGT ATTITUDE HAS BEEN IN SELF-DEFENSE AGAINST CFDT ATTACKS AND THAT IN ORDER TO DEESCALATE THE QUARREL CFDT SHOULD BE THE FIRST TO STOP CRITICIZING. THIS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE SEEN BY BOTH THE CFDT AND OBSERVERS AS STILL ANOTHER WAY OF ASSERTING CGT'S DOMINANT POSITION IN ITS RELATIONS WITH CFDT.

9. IN THE COURSE OF PRESS CONFERENCE ON 27 OCTOBER TO REPORT THE RESULTS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING, CFDT LEADER MAIRE WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO SOFT PEDAL THE STATEMENTS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE OGREL REPORT ON THE CRISIS OF THE LEFT. HE GENTLY REPLIED TO SEGUY'S SPEECHES CONCERNING THE CFDT AND REAFFIRMED HIS COMMITMENT TO THE UNITY OF ACTION STRATEGY. THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME THAT MAIRE HAS BLOWN HOT AND COLD WHEN IT COMES TO RELATIONS WITH THE CGT WHICH OFTEN HAS CREATED THE IMPRESSION OF HIS BEING OPPORTUNISTIC OR POLITICALLY NAIVE. WHAT COMPLICATES HIS POSITION AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME IS THAT PREPARATIONS ARE ALREADY UNDER WAY FOR THE NEXT CFDT CONGRESS IN THE SPRING. IN HIS SEARCH FOR A COMFORTABLE MAJORITY MAIRE IS FORCED TO MAKE CONCESSIONS TO BOTH THE LEFT AND THE RIGHT WITHIN THE CFDT, WHICH INEVITABLY MAKE HIM APPEAR INCONSISTENT. HE CAN ILL AFFORD AT THIS TIME TO USE ANY OTHER THAN A DEFENSIVE LANGUAGE TOWARDS THE CGT. THE "UNITY OF ACTION" IDEA HAS DEFINITELY BEEN OVERSOLD TO CFDT LEADERS.

10. COMMENT: NOTWITHSTANDING THE FOREGOING, CGT-CFDT WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE A SERIOUS EFFORT TO STAY OUT OF THE PCF-PS SQUABBLE EVEN IF PCF DECIDES TO ESCALATE IT FURTHER. THE LION'S SHARE OF THIS EFFORT, HOWEVER, IS LIKELY TO FALL ON CFDT WHICH WILL BE COMPELLED TO LEAN OVER BACKWARDS TO IGNORE CGT PROVOCATIONS AND AGGRESSIVE ASSERTIONS OF ITS DOMINANT POSITION IN TRADE UNION MOVEMENT. THE MORE THE PCF APPEARS TO BE LOSING GROUND TO THE PS, THE MORE COM-

PELLED CGT WILL BE TO ASSERT ITS UNQUESTIONED MAJORITY
POSITION IN ORGANIZED LABOR. IT MUST BE REMEMBERED
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THE PCF FALLBACK POSITION WHENEVER ELECTORAL RESULTS
ARE NOT FAVORABLE IS THAT IT IS THE PARTY OF THE FRENCH
WORKERS. CGT HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY IN MAKING
CREDIBLE THIS PC CLAIM.

11. CFDT, HOWEVER, WHICH PRIDES ITSELF FOR NOT HAVING
THE SAME RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PS AS CGT HAS WITH THE
PCF, MAY FIND IT EXPEDIENT UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCE
TO BORROW A LEAF FROM MITTERRAND'S BOOK AND FOLLOW
THE SAME STRATEGY THE PS HAS DEVISED TO DEAL WITH PC
CHALLENGES, NAMELY, STATESMANLIKE FORBEARANCE BY
REFUSING TO BE DRAWN INTO STERILE INTERNAL QUARRELING.
RUSH

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